

METHOD FOR PROMOTING PRODUCT SALES

EIELD OF THE INVENTION

[0001] The present invention relates to a method of promoting sales in general and, in particular, to a method of utilizing articles disposed in packing materials for use in the promotion of sales.

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BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

[0002] Packing boxes, containers and other articles of packing various consumer goods, such as food stuffs, beverages etc., bearing or containing promotional logos, trademarks, slogans or other markings, have long been known in the art. In order to attract consumers to purchase a certain product commercial companies engage in massive advertisement campaigns, which often include attaching small gifts to the promoted products. Such campaigns may include rewarding a customer who collects during the term of the campaign, a relatively short period of time, the greatest number of caps, covers, packaging, etc.

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[0003] Containers or container caps and covers for consumer goods containing promotional materials, such as paper or cardboard bearing promotional comics or pictures that may be cut, a plurality of complementary pieces forming a jigsaw puzzle, articles of various shapes that may form a toy, when assembled, or even a CD including games, etc., are also widely used for promotion purposes. There are also known, bottle or other container caps having a number or letter imprinted on each, commonly on the inner surface of the cap, wherein the numbers or letters on a plurality of the caps form a certain number or word which entitle the user to a gift.

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[0004] Such promotional methods are limited in creativity and interest, and therefore can be utilized by commercial companies for only short periods of time. Furthermore, the articles of such promotional methods have no object of continues creative interest and do not prompt collection of the articles as collector's items.

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[0005] Accordingly, there is a long felt need for, and it would be very desirable to have, a method that utilizes articles of creative interest having an artistic value, wherein one article which may be a part of a unique work, is disposed in a product and is collected and fitted by the user to complete such work. 5

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

[0006] The present invention provides a method for promoting sales of a product, the method including the steps of providing a plurality of articles combinable with one another and introducing one of these articles into a packaging of each unit of the promoted product. The articles which are retrievable from the packaging can be combined together to form a design. 10

[0007] According to one embodiment of the invention, the design is a pre-selected design and each of the articles constitutes part of the design. The design may be created by a consumer from a plurality of the articles. 15

[0008] According to another embodiment of the invention, the article may be shaped for piecing together with a plurality of complementary articles, into a complete design. Each of the articles may bear part of a design.

[0009] According to yet another embodiment of the invention, the design may be a jigsaw puzzle. Additionally, the design may comprise a picture of creative interest for enhancing long term collection of the articles. 20

[0010] According to yet another embodiment of the invention, the design may be a 3 dimensional object of creative interest for enhancing long term collection of all said articles shaped as matching parts of said object for completing said object. Each article is shaped as part of the object. 25

[0011] According to still another embodiment of the invention, the method may further comprise the step of providing a foundation on which the plurality of articles can be combined into the design.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

[0012] The present invention will be further understood and appreciated from the following detailed description taken in conjunction with the drawings in which:

[0013] Fig. 1 is a schematic illustration of capped bottles in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

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[0014] Fig. 2 is a schematic illustration of articles in various shapes disposed in caps according to one embodiment of the present invention.

[0014] Fig. 3 is a schematic illustration of a puzzle work of a logo in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

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[0015] Figs. 4a and 4b are schematic illustrations of caps having a rhombus head in accordance with one embodiment of the present invention;

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

[0016] The present invention relates to a method for promoting sales of a product. The method provides for utilizing a plurality of articles each constituting a part of a design and is combinable with one another. Each article is introduced into a packaging of each unit of the product. The articles which are retrievable from the packaging can be combined together to form a design. The design may be pre-selected to be of creative interest having an artistic value, wherein one article which may be a part of a unique work, is disposed in each unit of the product and is collected and fitted by the user to complete such work.

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[0017] Consumer goods, and in particular soft drinks, constitute a highly competitive and innovative field. Companies that manufacture and sell consumer goods continually introduce in the market different flavors, drink compositions, packaging for the goods, and so on, and spend huge amounts of money on sales promotion and advertisement campaigns. Each such company invests much effort in distinguishing its products from its competitors' products and in causing consumers to remain loyal to its brand. Such efforts are aimed at increasing the company's slice of the market, of both its existing and new products.

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- [0018] The present invention is devised to promote consumers to seek and purchase products utilizing the invention. To understand the method according to the present invention more clearly, the description shall use as an example the soft drinks market, but it will be appreciated that the method may be utilized in promoting sales of many other goods, such as cosmetics, foodstuff and many others. The method according to the present invention may also create new groups of customers that prefer buying the product being promoted by the method over any other alternative product. 5
- [0019] The innovative promoting concept according to the present invention integrates into promotion techniques beyond mere competition, collection and games, also new elements of artistic value, granting the purchase of the product a prolonged added value beyond its properties and composition. It is a particular feature of the present invention that in view of the artistic and collective values of the articles, they may become a subject of people's continuous interest and discussion over missing pieces to complete a work, works that have been completed, etc. Such interest may create an "exchange market" for rare pieces and provide immense promotional advantage to the product and increase sales. 10 15
- [0020] The invention utilizes caps and/or packing materials, such as containers for storing products, disposing in each one of them an article fashioned in various shapes and forms, and/or bearing a unique design. For purposes of the present application a design is a pattern, picture, a work of art or just a composition of colors. Such fashioned articles are designated for collection by the buyer of the product, for the purpose of preparing, creating or assembling of a jigsaw puzzle, picture or any other artistic or practical work, or an object. For purposes of the present application, an article is any piece of paper, cardboard, plastic or any other material, shaped in any fashion to snugly fit some other piece or pieces, which may or may not bear part of a design, and may be pieced together 20 25 30 with a plurality of complementary articles, to form a complete design or an object.

[0021] As an example of utilizing the method according to the present invention, a soft drinks company, for instance The Pepsi-Cola Company, introduces into the market special caps for sealing the soft drinks bottles. Each cap includes an extractable disk bearing a design, which is disposed adjacent to the inside surface of the cap, and which may function as a seal. Such disk constitutes one part of a plurality of parts of a jigsaw puzzle of a picture, or any other work of art. The jigsaw puzzle is prepared or assembled by buying a plurality of units of the product, in this case Pepsi-Cola's soft drink bottles, each cap of a bottle including a disk bearing part of a design to fit a certain part of the puzzle, collecting the disks disposed in each cap and assembling them into a design. Alternatively, the jigsaw puzzle may have an underlying base or foundation. 5

[0022] According to one embodiment of the invention, the inside surface of the cap may bear part of a design and the cap itself may be used as a part of the puzzle of a design. 10

[0023] According to another embodiment of the invention, there is provided a disk having 2 or 3 colors, according to a certain pattern, arranged and configured to be disposed in a cap of a bottle and serve as a sealing disk. The soft drink manufacturing company may introduce in the market various series of bottles of one or different drinks, having caps that include a disk bearing different colors. Customers may collect the caps and extract the disks included in them, for creating a vast number of available color designs and pattern combinations. 15

[0024] Alternatively, the disks may have various diameters substantially the same or smaller than the diameters of the caps in which they are disposed. 20
As shown in Fig. 1, bottle 2 is capped by cap 4 having a smaller diameter than cap 6 capping bottle 8. It will be appreciated that articles fashioned in various shapes and forms, and bearing a design may also be disposed inside caps of suitable sizes, though not being used as a seal. As shown in Fig. 2, a pyramid-like article 12 is disposed inside a compartment 20 in 25

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the cap 10, and sealed off by a sealing disk 18. An article having no particular geometric shape 16 is disposed inside a compartment 22 in the cap 14, and sealed off by a sealing disk 18'. Once the customer has uncapped the bottle, he may remove sealing disk 18 from cap 10 and collect article 12 as one part of a jigsaw puzzle.

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[0025] Preferably, the article may be disposed in the cap in such manner that it is hidden from the customer's eyes at the time of purchase. Only after buying the bottle and extracting the article from the cap, the customer may see the part of the design on the article. Still, at the time of launching a new promotion campaign, one series of the articles relating to the campaign may be issued exposing the design on the articles disposed in the products on the store shelves in order to illustrate to the customers the campaign and its options.

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[0026] Preferably, the soft drink's company may also supply or sell, for a marginal price, an underlying base or foundation or frame for placing on, or inserting into, the disks or other articles for building a puzzle.

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According to one embodiment of the invention the customer is supplied with a frame or fine panels for ease of assembling a frame. At the back of the puzzle, or picture, or work frame there may be a surface of any other material suitable for gluing on, or inserting into, the disks. The soft drinks manufacturing company's logo may be shown on any selected part of the jigsaw puzzle or on the frame.

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[0027] Preferably, the disks or any of the articles may be configured in various shapes and/or bear various designs, and distributed in quantities to be set by the company. A majority of the articles of a certain design of a promotion campaign may be manufactured and abundantly distributed each inside each of the products for easy collection by customers, whereas the remainder of the articles may be manufactured and distributed in small quantities so that in order to collect these articles and complete the design the customer will have to purchase greater quantities of the product for a

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longer period of time. This may increase interest in the promoted products and an incentive to seek the missing articles for completing the design, which in turn may add indirect publicity to the company, followed by additional sales.

[0028] The company may announce customers' contests of the most beautiful work created using the caps, disks or articles. The company may also recruit famous artists to provide the designs of a campaign, and deepen the artistic experience in collecting the articles. 5

[0029] In a preferred embodiment of the invention, the promoting company may issue an underlying board having a suitable frame, and also provide glue or attaching material for creating a predefined puzzle of the disks and/or article that have been collected. Alternatively, the underlying board and frame may provide for creating a puzzle or an artistic work according to the creative sense of each customer. Such puzzle or work may be examined and judged by experts and entitle the creator of the best work to a prize. 10 15

[0030] Preferably, the design and the underlying board and frame therefore, may be unique to each company using the method according to the present invention. For example, in Fig. 3, there is shown a schematic illustration of a puzzle work 30 assembled of articles 20 32 having various shapes and bearing parts of a logo 34.

[0031] Also, the company may establish a virtual display hall on the internet displaying a variety of the works created by the customers, by assembling the articles which have been manufactured and distributed by the company. Some of the articles may acquire collective value, due to the small and limited number distributed in the market, or due to the uniqueness of work that may be created thereby. It is a particular feature of the present invention that the design on the articles and/or the shape of the articles and/or the quantity of articles comprising the whole design or work or object, may be selected in such manner as to enhance interest and require collection for a relatively long period of time. 25 30

[0032] The method according to the present invention may be utilized by all companies using bottles with caps, containers, cans, and other packaging for their products, which may hold an article, and for which large advertisement budgets are invested in promoting their circulation in order to acquire as large a market share as possible.

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[0033] According to one embodiment of the invention, the caps or packaging may be uniquely shaped so that they may be pieced together with a plurality of complementary caps or packaging to form a complete puzzle work or object. According to another embodiment, the caps and packaging may contain a shaped article which can be easily extracted and used as part of a puzzle work or object. According to yet another embodiment, the upper external surface of the caps and packaging may bear a part of a design which may be covered by an opaque peelable cover.

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[0034] To expand the variety of shapes and sizes of the articles used according to the invention, the volume of the cap or packaging may be increased to allow a larger article or disk, to be used. Articles of various shapes may be used: round, rectangular, rhombus, etc., to fit into the puzzle work or object, allowing the articles to join one another. Additionally, the articles may comprise different texture, shapes and colors. The articles may be contained in the cap and/or packaging or the designs may be imprinted on them, without compromising the product's quality or the consumers' health.

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[0035] Referring to Figs. 4a and 4b, there is shown as an example a schematic illustration of a cap 40 having a rhombus head 42. Cap 40 includes protruding stripes 44 along the edges of head 42, as illustrated

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in Fig. 4a, and matching recessed stripes 46 as illustrated in Fig. 4b.

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Alternatively, head 42 may feature any other possible fast joining shape. Cap 40 may be used to form practical objects, such as a bathroom mat, flowerpot plate, a plate for placing hot dishes or cup on it, etc. Such objects may bear the promoting company's logo or slogan or any other desired design.

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[0036] The articles according to the present invention may be sold, with their top portion covered or visible, as the company may deem fit.

The company may organize contests and award prizes to selected customers, who purchase its products and prepare a practical or artistic work or object using the articles.

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[0037] Vast and diverse benefits may be gained by companies implementing the method according to the present invention, including, among others, an increased number of customers, strengthened customers' loyalty to the company's brands, increased volumes of sales of products, expanding public relations resulting from written articles and reports in the various media, relating to the unique series of articles issued, the contest and the works. Use of the invention may enhance a selective approach to various target groups, such as children, women by targeting the subjects of the design of the puzzles and objects to each specific group, thus strengthening the connection with them. It may also enhance the desire of customers to repeatedly purchase the company's products for a longer term, due to their wish to collect the missing pieces for completing the puzzle work or object.

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[0038] While the invention has been described with respect to a limited number of embodiments, it will be appreciated that many variations, modifications and other applications of the invention may be made. It will further be appreciated that the invention is not limited to what has been described hereinabove merely by way of example. Rather, the invention is limited solely by the claims which follow.

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